

Education Pays

Theme and Level

Theme: Evaluate Options

Level: Getting Started, Looking Deeper

At a Glance

Students explore the differences between various rates of pay. They also discover the link between education and wages.

Time: 75 minutes.

Essential Questions

- What is the relationship between education and wages?

Preparation

- Reserve computer lab with overhead projector enabled
- Establish CIS portfolios before this lesson
- Familiarize yourself with current high and low wage occupations by using CIS Occupation Sort: when selecting factors, choose only "Wages;" select "At least \$5,000/month" for the first sort, then start over and select "At least minimum wage" and uncheck the items above it in the second "willing to accept" column
- Create two large charts (one titled "High Pay" and the other titled "Low Pay") with these four columns: Occupation, Wages, Education Level, and Working Conditions
- Plan vocabulary list for your class based on words from this lesson
- (Note: The CIS Occupations file also lists information about wages for every occupation)

Steps

1. Show PowerPoint (PPT) Slide 1. Tell students that the goal of this lesson is for them to learn about wage realities and the relationship between education and pay.
2. Show PPT Slide 2. Ask students to define the terms "High Wages" and "Low Wages," then ask students to give dollar ranges for each one. Note these on the board.
3. Discuss the difference between median pay and starting pay. Explain that the starting wage of an occupation is difficult to compute since it is affected by many factors, such as the level of education, experience, previous jobs, and urgency to fill the position. Thus, the beginning wage is not the best indicator upon which to base occupational wage information. The median wage is a better indicator. In the median wage, half of people in the occupation will earn below the median, and half will earn above the median. It sometimes takes years to begin earning the median wage.
4. Explain that wages can be paid hourly, weekly, monthly, or annually. To portray wage information in a consistent way, you may have to convert figures.
5. Show PPT Slide 3. Ask students to calculate the figures for the two blank columns. Tell students that the average person works 40 hours per week, 176 hours per month and is paid for working 52 weeks per year.
6. Show PPT Slide 4. Ensure that all students calculated correctly, reviewing any errors.
7. Ask students what they learned and discuss.
8. Brainstorm and record a list of occupations that students think are "High Pay." List these on the "High Pay" chart under the Occupations column.
9. Repeat this process for "Low Pay" occupations, recording them on the "Low Pay" chart.
10. Discuss the reasons for students' choices.
11. Show PPT Slide 5. Ask, "What factors influence wages or salary?" Discuss. If students do not mention location, industry, unemployment rate, cost of living, product/service, and union presence then address these yourself.
12. Remind students that when we use the term "wages," we are not discussing self-employed income or income derived from investments.
13. Assign occupations, from among those students listed, to individuals or pairs. Ask students to research the wage information, level of education required, and working conditions for this occupation using CIS Occupations.
14. Instruct students to record their findings in the columns where indicated.
15. Ask students to share their findings and discuss the results, patterns, surprises, and conclusions.
16. Show PPT Slide 6. It is titled Education Pays. Ask students to draw their own bar graphs or charts to illustrate the information differently.
17. Show PPT Slide 7. Review the assignment. Ask students to write a two paragraph report on the concept "education pays," using as much of the new vocabulary and information discussed in this lesson as possible and including a statement about the level of education and earnings they have as personal goals. Assign students to share this with a parent or guardian and return the signed report the following class period.

Variations and Accommodations

- Students could survey family or friends for information about the level of education and entry level wages in their occupations. Ask students to record the information on the survey sheet. (No name is required; stress to students and to people surveyed that this is confidential information.) Pool the results and compile a list of occupations, education levels and entry level wages. Present the summary to the class.
- Ask students to group the occupations by wages and by education level. Discuss the patterns, similarities, differences.
- Ask students to write a short summary of the goal of the exercise, the process, and the results.
- Students could investigate other sources of income such as self-employment, second jobs, gains from stock market, and returns on investments.
- Work one-on-one with any student needing special assistance or pair student with helpful partner.

Assessment

Use the *Education Pays Scoring Guide* to evaluate student work.

Portfolio

Students enter their reflections about this activity in the **What did you learn about how you set goals and make decisions from the career work you completed?** text box in the Evaluate Options section of Career Plan.

Materials

Computer lab with overhead projector and CIS access

[Education Pays \(PPTX\)](#)

[Education Pays Scoring Guide \(PDF\)](#)

[Education Pays Scoring Guide \(DOCX\)](#)

Chart paper

Goals and Standards

Common Core State Standards

- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Reading Informational Text
- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Writing
- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Speaking & Listening
- Mathematical Practice: Reason Abstractly and Quantitatively
- Mathematical Practice: Attend to Precision

National Career Development Guidelines

- GOAL ED1 Attain educational achievement and performance levels needed to reach your personal and career goals.
- GOAL CM2 Use a process of decision-making as one component of career development.
- GOAL CM3 Use accurate, current and unbiased career information during career planning and management.

American School Counselor Association

- Academic Development, Career Development

Bloom's Taxonomy: Understanding, Analyzing, Applying

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success

Mindset Standards

- Understanding that Postsecondary Education and Life-Long Learning are Necessary for Long-Term Career Success
- Belief in Using Abilities to their Fullest to Achieve High-Quality Results and Outcomes
- Positive Attitude Toward Work and Learning

Behavior Standards: Learning Strategies

- Demonstrate Critical-Thinking Skills to Make Informed Decisions
- Apply Media and Technology Skills
- Gather Evidence and Consider Multiple Perspectives to Make Informed Decisions

Behavior Standards: Self-Management Skills

- Demonstrate Ability to Assume Responsibility
- Demonstrate Self-Discipline and Self-Control
- Demonstrate Ability to Work Independently

Behavior Standards: Social Skills

- Use Effective Oral and Written Communication Skills and Listening Skills
- Create Positive and Supportive Relationships with Other Students
- Use Effective Collaboration and Cooperation Skills

Credits and Citations

- "Education Pays". *Bureau of Labor Statistics*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015. Web. www.bls.gov/emp/emptab7.htm